

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4559

INFO USMISSION USEC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 5914

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT, PO, XJ

SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY ITALIAN VIEWS ON PORTUGUESE COLONIAL RELATIONS
IN AFTERMATH OF COUP

1. DURING APRIL 29 CONVERSATION ON OTHER SUBJECTS, RESPONSIBLE ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL PROVIDED US WITH PRELIMINARY ITALIAN VIEWS ON POSSIBLE EVOLUTION OF PORTUGAL'S RELATIONS WITH ITS AFRICAN COLONIES IN WAKE OF COUP. SOURCE SAID THAT ALTHOUGH ITALIANS HAVE NO RPT NO HARD INFORMATION, THEY HAVE BEEN MONITORING CLOSELY PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF GENERAL SPINOLA AND LIBERATION MOVEMENT LEADERS NETTO, CABRAL AND DOS SANTOS ON SITUATION. HE OBSERVED THAT ALL SPOKESMEN, WITH NOTABLE EXCEPTION OF NETTO, HAD BEEN EXTREMELY CAREFUL TO LEAVE ALL OPTIONS OPEN FOR EVENTUAL POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATIONS. HE REMARKED THAT SPINOLA MUST BE PARTICULARLY CAUTIOUS LEST HE ALIENATE WHITE MINORITY WHO COULD CONCEIVABLY OPT FOR RHODESIA-TYPE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, SHOULD IT PERCEIVE OVERLY-CONSILIATORY GOP ATTITUDE. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE MENTIONED RECENT EXPULSION OF MISSIONARIES AS INDICATIVE OF "NASTINESS"

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OF WHITE MINORITY.

2. OFFICIAL OBSERVED THAT EVEN BEFORE COUP ITALIANS HAD GENERALLY FAVORED SOME TYPE OF EC NINE INITIATIVE TO ENCOURAGE PORTUGUESE TO NEGOTIATE WITH LIBERATION MOVEMENTS. HE SAID ITALIANS WENT ALONG WITH DUTCH THINKING ON THIS PROPOSAL AND THAT THERE WAS A GENERAL CONSENSUS AMONG THE NINE, WITH NOTABLE EXCEPTION OF FRENCH, THAT EC SHOULD MAKE SOME APPROACH TO PORTUGUESE. SOURCE EXPRESSED PERSONAL VIEW THAT COUP COULD CATALYZE AN EC INITIATIVE WITH GOP, BUT AS YET NO ONE HAD PROPOSED SPECIFIC MEETING OF NINE ON SUBJECT; HE REMARKED THAT IT MIGHT BE TOO EARLY AS YET FOR SUCH A MOVE. SOURCE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN FAVORABLE DISCUSSION AMONG NINE OF COORDINATING A POSSIBLE INITIATIVE WITH OTHER CONCERNED AND INFLUENTIAL COUNTRIES, SUCH AS US, BRAZIL AND CANADA.

3. SOURCE EXPRESSED VIEW THAT PORTUGUESE COUP PROVIDED EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR GETTING PORTUGUESE COLONIAL ISSUE OFF BACKS OF EC AND NATO, BUT HANDLING OF ANY OUTSIDE INITIATIVE WOULD REQUIRE GREAT CARE. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT SOMETHING POSITIVE COULD BE DONE BEFORE NEXT UNGA AT WHICH PORTUGUESE COLONIES PROMISED TO BE EXPLOSIVE ISSUE. VOLPE

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